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Quality of Care and Outcomes Assessment

UNDESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF CARDIOLOGY PRACTICE RESULTING IN TERMINATION OF PRIMARY CARE REFERRALS

Poster Contributions

Poster Sessions, Expo North

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Background: Accountable care organization and high quality affordable patient care would need impeccable team work between primary and specialist care physicians. Hence, we evaluated factors that would prompt termination of continued collaboration between primary care physicians and consulting cardiologists.

Methods: One hundred three primary care doctors were interviewed and a 11 point questionnaire was compiled. The eleven potential factors for cause of termination of referrals were graded on a scale of 1 (least important) to 10 (most important). Mean scores were computed for each factor to determine the most important factors for the referring primary care physicians.

Results: We interviewed 84 physicians that practiced in the city and 19 in rural areas. The average years in practice for the primary care physicians was 20.9 years. The most important factors for termination of referrals in the order of diminishing importance were cardiologist's bedside manners as perceived by the patient (7.9 +2.1), poor feedback from the cardiologist (7.8 +2.3) and patients not getting their questions fully answered by the cardiologist during the visit (7.8+1.9). Less important factors were staff failing to respond to calls promptly (7.2+2.0), ease of getting an appointment (7.0 +2.3), the patient is displeased with the clinical plan (6.6 +2.3), staff friendliness (6.6 +2.5), physician promptness (5.6 +2.6), tests are not done the same day/results are not given promptly (5.6 +2.4), cardiologist keeps the patient even if there is only a minor cardiac problem (5.4 +3.0), and cardiologist is too aggressive with tests (4.9 +2.6).

Conclusions: The most important factors that result in termination of referrals between primary care physicians and specialist cardiologists include cardiologist's bedside manners as perceived by the patient, poor feedback from the cardiologist, and patients not getting their questions fully answered by the cardiologist during the visit.